

SOVIET APPROACHES IN MIDDLE EAST

- I. USSR, in "Geneva sprit", adroitly pushing year-old neutrality campaign in troubled Middle East.
 - A. In guise of peaceful merchants, Communists are displaying attractive wares to have-not nations of area--trade, technical assistance and guns--without visible political strings attached.
 - B. Immediate purpose: block extension, strengthening of area's Western-sponsored defense structure by exploiting local dissensions (Israeli-Arab troubles, Turkish-Iraqi pact, Afghan-Pakistani dispute). Efforts focussed on forcing withdrawal of U.S. bases, coaxing development of neutralism.

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Army
review(s)
completed.

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C. In longer view, we can see outlines of an even grander and more patient Soviet program--elimination of all Western economic, political influence in Middle East, opening of area to Communist influence and eventual control.

USSR's "relaxation" policy already weakening anti-Soviet foreign policies in many Middle East countries.

A. Soviet neutrality theme, ("can't get hurt off the playing field") appears more plausible than Western tune of "collective defense."

B. Soviet overtures genuinely attractive: interest on loans as low as 2 and 2½ percent; barter arrangements for area chronically short in hard currency.

C. Overtures also give local politicians chance to pressure West for aid.

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III. Communists' most persistent and spectacular overtures are aimed at Egypt and Saudi Arabia, with Syria a fair third.

A. Egyptian military mission to Moscow has made exchanging cotton and rice for tanks, jet fighters and bombers,

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IV. If Egyptian-Soviet arms deal is fully implemented, Egypt would gain marked superiority over Israel in aircraft and tanks.

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- B. G-2 credits Egypt with 129 medium tanks, not including recent deliveries to Alexandria of some 120 UK-built WWII "Valentines". USSR, according to agreement, is to deliver 100 heavy tanks.
- C. In terms actual military capabilities, however, effect of purchases would be uncertain. Egyptians are keeping present small air force operational only with difficulty and would certainly find it hard to absorb and put to effective use 200 more planes. To a lesser extent, added tanks would present similar problems.
- D. Further, the present Egyptian lack of competent military personnel in all ranks means that an intensive training effort--maintained for a period of years--would be needed.

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V. Soviets have also made deal with Egypt

which will jump 1955 petroleum sales to three times last year's level (from 273,000 to over 850,000 tons).

A. Also urging Egyptians to accept Soviet aid on projected "high dam".

B. Egypt also bartering cotton for ChiCom steel reinforcing rods.

C. Egyptian government states Chou-En-lai will pay visit before end of '55 to renew Bandung contacts with Nasr. Nasr is to visit USSR next spring.

I. Both Egyptians and Saudis allegedly told that Moscow is interested in entering into security guarantees with them and other Middle Eastern states.

A. Such offers forecast by Bulganin's Geneva statement that USSR prepared, together with other powers, to guarantee neutrality of any country so desiring.

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- B. Offers especially attractive to Arab States because they spell guarantee against Israel.
- C. In case of Saudi Arabia, such guarantee would automatically mean end to US Dhahran air base agreement.
- D. However Saudis' frustration over general Middle East developments (Iraqi-Turkish pact, Israel, and its own territorial disputes) have reached peak where top Saudi officials-- including Prime Minister Faisal and Defense Minister Mishaal have already all but declared an intent to cancel Dhahran agreement.
 - 1. Notice of intent to modify or cancel must be given this Dec.

VII. Tacit Soviet support for Arab claims against Israel is another related gimmick:

- A. In June, Izvestia made most specific Soviet press attack on Israel for two years. Since then, Soviet news items slanted ~~TOP SECRET~~ against Israel.

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B. Israel views any military strengthening of Arabs as threatening its very existence.

C. Israel can be expected to make maximum representations to US, Britain and France, demanding new guarantees, arms.



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E. Thus, USSR's immediate tactics appear as a "black twin" to current US objectives in area:

1. US aim--Arab-Israeli settlement:
Soviet arms deals, in particular, will raise tensions here.
2. US aim--Northern Tier: cheap and plentiful Soviet arms for Egypt will invite invidious comparison with handful of US hardware for Tier-

member Iraq
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VIII. USSR's efforts build economic contacts with Afghanistan received a boost when Pakistan closed frontier during recent rupture. Kabul soon signed transit agreement with Moscow.

A. Most recently, Soviet bloc has offered Afghanistan a medical mission and medical equipment, as well as materials, equipment and technicians for installing water systems in Kabul and Kandahar.



C. Bloc aid to Afghanistan has certainly encouraged that country to take obdurate attitude in its basic dispute with Pakistan.

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XI. Iran being pressured by USSR to prevent

it from joining Turkist-Iraqi pact.

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here, also, Soviets are holding

out bait of a guaranteed neutrality.

Shah has been invited to Moscow, prob-

ably will go in early '56. Elaborate

Soviet offers friendship, aid can be

expected.

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Iran is interested but he is hesitant about
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Turkish-Iraqi pact and strong Soviet
efforts could keep Iran neutral. Shah's
several years' drive for massive
American aid has not brought what he
wants, and he may soon be willing to
listen to Moscow.

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